



# What is tithing money actually spent on?

by Haley Lundberg | Jan. 25, 2021

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are asked to pay one-tenth of our income to the Lord through His Church. The Church's [Gospel Topics page on tithing](#) explains, "By paying tithing, Church members show their gratitude to God for their blessings and their resolve to trust in the Lord rather than in material things. They also help further the work of the Lord in the earth, blessing others of

God's children with the opportunity to learn of Him and grow in the gospel."

But what does that mean specifically? How are we directly helping to "further the work of the Lord on the earth"? When we write a check or click "submit" on the online donation form, what is that donation spent on?

Well, according to a [Church Newsroom release](#) published in 2019, donations are spread among six categories, and they all revolve around the four-fold mission of the Church: to teach the gospel to the world, to strengthen the membership of the Church, to perform saving ordinances for the dead, and to care for the poor and needy.

Here is a look at the six categories included in the release.

## **Supporting the Global Missionary Program**

One perhaps obvious way that tithing donations help further the work of the Lord is through missionary work. President Russell M. Nelson [said](#):

Before His final Ascension, [Jesus Christ] commissioned [His apostles] to "go ... and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Apostles heeded that instruction. They also called upon others to help them fulfill the Lord's command. Today, under the direction of modern apostles and prophets, that same charge has been extended to missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, they strive to fulfill that divine command—renewed in our day by the Lord Himself—to take the fulness of the gospel abroad and bless the lives of people everywhere.

According to the [latest statistical report](#), at the end of 2019, there were more than 67,000 full-time missionaries around the world preaching the gospel. While missionaries and their families do contribute to their expenses, many aspects of missionary service require additional funding. Approximately [400 missions](#)—including mission homes, apartments, offices, automobiles, and travel—are all funded by the Church.

## **Building, Maintaining, and Repairing Meetinghouses**

The Church pays for the construction and maintenance of the meetinghouses that serve almost [31,000 congregations](#). These buildings also serve as spaces for community education, family history research, and emergency response. Having a local meetinghouse gives members across the world a physical space to gather and grow together in their understanding of the gospel.

## **Helping the Poor and Needy**

In a recent [Facebook post](#), President M. Russell Ballard stated:

The Lord has made it clear that one of the great responsibilities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that we are to feed the hungry and the poor. We are to reach out and take care of them. May God bless us all in our efforts as we do so.

► You may also like: [The touching story behind why President Ballard keeps an Oreo on his desk](#)

[Latter-day Saint Charities](#) is a global program that partners with many organizations, such as the Red Cross, to provide assistance, primarily to those who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. [The most recent](#)

[annual report](#) shows that the Church's humanitarian aid program has given more than \$2.3 billion in aid in 197 countries since it was created in 1985. Local leaders also regularly help provide food, housing, and other temporal needs to community members and families through the Church's welfare program.

## **Building Temples and Supporting Family History Programs**

One of the foundational principles of the Church is the doctrine of connecting families across generations. The spiritual aspect of that work is done in the 200+ announced or operating temples, all built and maintained through Church funding. [FamilySearch](#), the Church's nonprofit family history organization, is free for public use and is also funded by Church donations.

President Joseph F. Smith [stated](#), “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”

## **Investing in Education**

Another foundational principle of the Church is spiritual and temporal education. President Nelson has [said](#), “Your mind is precious! It is sacred. Therefore, the education of one’s mind is also sacred. Indeed, education is a religious responsibility.”

The Church's seminaries and institutes provide religious education for over 700,000 students every year, and the Church-owned universities and business college have a combined total of almost 100,000 students. Additionally, the global [BYU-Pathway Worldwide](#) program is funded by the

Church and provides those with limited resources or opportunities access to higher education.

## General Administration of the Church

This category may sound a little vague but that's because it is so broad; It includes any other miscellaneous administrative costs in running a worldwide organization with millions of members globally.

► You may also like: [Presiding Bishopric gives rare interview explaining Church's financial reserves, tithing](#)

After tithing donations are submitted to the headquarters of the Church through local leaders, the allocation of donations to each of the areas above are decided by a council comprised of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric. Acting according to revelation, they make decisions as they are directed by the Lord (see [Doctrine and Covenants 120:1](#)).

This video from the Presiding Bishopric explains how the decision to use Church finances is taken very seriously. He says, “The three of us, we have a business background … but ultimately, any decision is made in the spirit of prayer. We seek the will of the Lord. We try our best to be instruments in the hands of the Lord.”

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## Decisions on How to Use Church Finances are Made in a Spirit



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